Received 09 December 2003

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. An oral formulation comprising:
   (a) chlorhexidine or a salt thereof;
   (b) a zinc salt;
   (c) masking and/or flavouring agents, including (i) a first sweetening agent having an immediate but transient effect and (ii) a second sweetening agent having a delayed but prolonged effect, said second sweetening agent being neohesperidine chalcone; and
   (d) other conventional components of oral formulations.

2. An oral formulation according to claim 1, wherein said first sweetening agent is saccharin or a salt thereof.

3. An oral formulation according to claim 2, comprising up to 0.05% (w/w) of saccharin sodium.

4. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 3, comprising up to 0.1% (w/w) of neohesperidine dihydrochalcone.

5. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 4, comprising 0.1 to 1.0% (w/w) of chlorhexidine or a salt thereof.

6. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 5, comprising 0.1 to 1.0% (w/w) of the zinc salt.

7. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising one or more gluconate salt(s).

8. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the zinc salt is zinc gluconate.

9. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the chlorhexidine salt is chlorhexidine digluconate.

10. An oral formulation according to claim 9, comprising about 0.6% (w/w) of chlorhexidine digluconate.

11. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the chlorhexidine salt is chlorhexidine diacetate.

12. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 11, further comprising additional masking and/or flavouring agents selected from flavouring oils and methyl salicylate.

13. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 12, comprising 0.1 to 5% (w/w) of said masking and/or flavouring agents.

14. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 13, comprising components (d) selected from the group consisting of: fluoride materials, dentally acceptable abrasive materials, surfactants, thickeners, gelling agents, humectants, alcohol and water.

15. An oral formulation according to claim 14, wherein said surfactants are selected from non-ionic and zwitterionic surfactants.

16. An oral formulation according to claim 15, wherein said non-ionic surfactants are macrogol ethers.

17. An oral formulation according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein said zwitterionic surfactants are selected from the group consisting of betaines and alkylamido alkyl amines.

18. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 15 to 17, wherein said surfactants comprise a combination of non-ionic and zwitterionic surfactants.

19. An oral formulation according to claim 18, wherein said surfactants comprise a combination of a macrogol ether and cocamidopropyl betaine.

20. An oral formulation according to claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the ratio of the non-ionic surfactant(s) to the zwitterionic surfactant(s) is about 2.4:1 by weight.

21. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 15 to 20, comprising 0.1 to 10% (w/w) of said surfactants.

22. An oral formulation according to claim 21, comprising about 1.7% (w/w) of said surfactants.

23. An oral formulation according to any one of claims 1 to 22, being a toothpaste, a dentifrice, mouthwash, chewing gum or a lozenge